

HAD steps up publicity and inspections relating to anti-epidemic regulations (with photo)

The Office of the Licensing Authority (OLA) of the Home Affairs Department (HAD) stepped up publicity and inspections relating to the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirement and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (Cap. 599F) (the Regulation).

The Government relaxed social distancing measures in a gradual and orderly manner starting from February 18, 2021. Some of the premises listed in the schedule of the Regulation (the scheduled premises) are allowed to be open subject to relevant requirements and restrictions as set out in the directions issued by the Secretary for Food and Health according to the Regulation (the Directions). On the effective date of the Directions, the OLA uploaded the relevant requirements and restrictions onto the OLA website for easy reference by the premises concerned. In addition, the OLA also issued letters to individual premises notifying them of the applicable requirements and restrictions.

To ensure relevant premises have been operating in compliance with the requirements and restrictions as set out in the Directions, apart from stepping up inspections, the OLA also conducted joint operations with the Police. From February 18 to February 25, the OLA conducted more than 1 600 inspections (including joint operations involving other departments), and 16 verbal warnings were given. Premises inspected were found operating generally in compliance with relevant Directions.

A spokesman for the HAD today (February 26) said, "We would like to thank the managers of the premises for their cooperation, which enabled the implementation of the Government's anti-epidemic policies. As for the few premises that have not been acting in full compliance with the Directions, most of the non-compliances were due to the fact that the managers had not been familiar with the relevant requirements and restrictions. OLA enforcement officers had explained the requirements and gave verbal warnings on-site, with a view to reminding the managers to make necessary rectifications as soon as possible."

The OLA is empowered to conduct inspections and take enforcement actions according to the Regulation for scheduled premises under the OLA's purview (including amusement game centres, club-houses, karaoke establishments, mah jong/tin kau premises and hotels/guesthouses).

According to the Regulation, if the manager of the premises contravenes the Directions, he or she, on conviction, is liable to a fine of \$50,000 and to imprisonment for six months. Customers patronising the scheduled premises should also comply with various anti-epidemic regulations and restrictions,

including the requirements on group gatherings and wearing of masks. Otherwise, he or she may have constituted an offence under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Prohibition on Group Gathering) Regulation (Cap. 599G) or the Prevention and Control of Disease (Wearing of Mask) Regulation (Cap. 599I), and is liable to a fixed penalty of \$5,000.

The spokesman said, "To minimise the risk of transmission of COVID-19, the OLA will continue to step up publicity, inspections and enforcement actions. We urge the managers of hotels, guesthouses, club-houses and amusement game centres to follow the requirements and restrictions under the Regulation. We would also like to remind the managers and the public to exercise self-discipline and co-operate to fight the virus together."



Cluster of Clostridium difficile toxin cases in Caritas Medical Centre

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The spokesperson for Caritas Medical Centre (CMC) made the following announcement today (February 26):

Three male patients (aged 82 to 89) in the Rehabilitation Ward of the Department of Orthopaedics and Traumatology have presented with diarrhoea since February 20 and their clinical test results were positive for Clostridium difficile. The three patients are currently being treated under isolation with stable condition.

The hospital has already implemented a series of infection control measures in the ward concerned, including:

1. Enhanced disinfection and cleaning of the ward concerned;
2. Reinforced stringent contact precautions; and
3. Enhanced hand hygiene for staff and patients.

The hospital will closely monitor the situation of the ward concerned. The cases have been reported to the Hospital Authority Head Office and the Centre for Health Protection for necessary follow-up.

Meetings of Legislative Council Committees

The following is issued on behalf of the Legislative Council Secretariat:

Details of the meetings of the Legislative Council (LegCo) Committees to be held in the LegCo Complex during the week from March 1 to 5 are available in the meeting schedule attached.

The information in the meeting schedule is subject to change. Please refer to the LegCo Calendar on the LegCo Website (www.legco.gov.hk) for the latest details of meetings.

Members of the public can watch or listen to the meetings via the Webcast system on the LegCo Website. To observe the proceedings of the meetings at the LegCo Complex, members of the public may call 3919 3399 during office hours to reserve seats.

Hong Kong Customs combats unfair trade practices in employment agency services

Hong Kong Customs today (February 26) arrested a woman suspected of having wrongly accepted payment in the course of selling employment agency service, in contravention of the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (TDO).

Customs earlier received information alleging that a woman had claimed that she could arrange for relatives and friends of a foreign domestic helper to come and work in Hong Kong. After receiving a fee of about \$30,000, the woman failed to provide the relevant employment service and did not offer a refund.

After investigation, Customs officers today arrested a 45-year-old

woman, who has been released on bail pending further investigation.

Customs reminds traders to comply with the requirements of the TD0 and consumers to procure services at reputable shops.

Under the TD0, any trader commits an offence if at the time of acceptance of payment the trader intends not to supply the product or intends to supply a materially different product, or there are no reasonable grounds for believing that the trader will be able to supply the product within a specified or reasonable period. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for five years.

Members of the public may report any suspected violations of the TD0 to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).

Public hospitals daily update on COVID-19 cases

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

As at 9am today (February 26), 19 COVID-19 confirmed patients were discharged from hospital in the last 24 hours. So far, a total of 10 493 patients with confirmed or probable infection have been discharged.

At present, there are 677 negative pressure rooms in public hospitals with 1 224 negative pressure beds activated. A total of 205 confirmed patients are currently hospitalised in 24 public hospitals and a community treatment facility, among which 18 patients are in critical condition, 10 are in serious condition and the remaining 177 patients are in stable condition.

The Hospital Authority will maintain close contact with the Centre for Health Protection to monitor the latest developments and to inform the public and healthcare workers on the latest information in a timely manner.

Details of the above-mentioned patients are as follows:

Patient condition	Case numbers
Discharged	4732, 9911, 10319, 10485, 10507, 10604, 10626, 10732, 10751, 10764, 10779, 10799, 10800, 10816, 10819, 10839, 10857, 10869, 10878
Critical	1989, 3496, 6125, 6607, 6794, 8018, 8078, 9049, 9135, 9612, 9907, 9953, 10358, 10367, 10379, 10585, 10611, 10904

Serious	6386, 7076, 7468, 8221, 9055, 9550, 9733, 9793, 10023, 10083
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